



# Honor Flight DFW 2019 Annual Report

## Mission Statement

Honor Flight DFW is dedicated to honoring our country's veterans for the sacrifices they have made to keep our nation safe by providing them with an all expense paid overnight trip to visit the memorials in Washington, D.C., those memorials which symbolize the spirit, sacrifice, and commitment of these American heroes.

## Highlights of 2019

- ★ To date HFDFW has traveled over 2,000 veterans to DC.
- ★ In 2019, Honor Flight DFW safely traveled a total of 164 veterans:

### **38 WWII Veterans**

The average age of the WWII veterans traveling with HFDFW in 2019 was 95.5 years old. HFDFW Flight #40 travelled 2 WWII Veterans who were 100 years old.



### **51 Korean Veterans**

The average age of a Korean veteran is 86 years old

### **8 Cold War Veterans**

The average age of Cold War veteran is late 70's early 80's

### **71 Vietnam Veterans**

The average age of a Vietnam Veteran is mid 60's to 80 years old

### **158 Guardians**

## Impact on Veterans and Families

We're gone for only 36 Hours and yet those 36 Hours of Honor are treasured by the veterans. The veterans call it a "trip of a lifetime".

The Honor Flights make a big difference in the lives of our veterans. We hear in their words when they return: "I finally have closure", "I thought we were forgotten", "I still have nightmares, but they are less frequent and less severe", "What a glorious feeling", "It is an experience I will never forget", "I just wanted to see the memorials before I died", "I feel at peace", "I am proud I served in the military".

Honor Flight DFW trips impact not only the veteran, but also their family and the community. Veterans finally have an opportunity to join their brothers and sisters to remember and honor those that passed during their time of service. Each moment is one of reflection and closure.

## Honor Flight DFW Volunteers clocked-in 17,500 hours for 2019

The mission of HFDFW could not be accomplished without the efforts of volunteers. HFDFW volunteers, whether they are writing letters for Mail Call, collecting goodies for the 'snack bags', post trip cleaning and servicing of the wheelchairs, serving as a Guardian, clapping and cheering the veterans at their Welcome Home Celebration, are dedicated to the mission of honoring veterans. Many of the volunteers have been faithfully volunteering for over 6 years, some for over 10 years.

- ★ HFDFW is **all volunteer** (no paid employees) 501(c)(3) organization. This year HFDFW volunteered 17,500 hours of their time and talents. It is difficult to put a dollar amount on volunteer hours yet according to 2019 figures we can assume that the monetary value of the HFDFW volunteer hours is estimated at **\$439,250** (\$25.10 Texas Source: <https://independentsector.org/news-post/new-value-volunteer-time-2019/> )

## **The veterans' safety is the single overriding priority for HFDFW.**

- ★ Nothing takes greater precedence than the safe travel of veterans to Washington, D.C. As each year passes, the safe travel of the veterans becomes more challenging. Flying the old warriors is no easy feat given their myriad of physical, functional, and cognitive issues.
- ★ The experienced HFDFW team was prepared for each of the veteran's individual challenges and safely returned all of the veterans to DFW. We are thankful for the continued support of the medical professionals and support team members who readily volunteer to offer their expertise to the veterans.

### *HFDFW efforts to enhance the safety of the veterans are:*

- ★ Prior to the veteran's trip assignment, the veteran receives a call from medical team to discuss with the veteran, and when available a family member. The physical demands of the journey and potential challenges of overnight travel. During this call the medical needs of the veteran are identified i.e. oxygen, CPAP, injectable insulin, colostomy, medical nutrition.
- ★ The medical team identifies veterans who are taking medication for the treatment of Alzheimer's and dementia as well as those whose application indicate cognitive issues. A call is made to assess HFDFW's ability to safely travel the veteran and to identify a family member who will travel with the veteran.
- ★ Two weeks prior to the trip the medical team makes follow-up calls to each of the veteran to update any medical/physical/cognitive changes.
- ★ Due to the age of the veterans, additional support staff was added to assist veterans and to ensure all the veterans' needs were met.

- ★ Members of the Leadership/Medical/Support team members carry a detailed individualized duties and assignments document on the trip to assure all safety aspects of the trip are covered by the team.
- ★ Each veteran and guardian receives a travel name pouch that contains emergency contact information and medical information that is essential in the case of an emergency.
- ★ Four Guardian Training sessions were held for all guardians traveling with HFDFW.
- ★ A month before the flight the guardians receive weekly email communication from HFDFW trip leads.
- ★ Four Pre-Flight Briefings, one week before each trip, were held for veterans, guardians, medical, and support team. One hundred percent of veterans attended the Pre-Flight Briefing.
- ★ Team Leader meetings are held prior to each trip.

### **Financial Stability**

- ★ Over 350 veterans remain on the Waiting List.
- ★ HFDFW remains financially sound.
- ★ HFDFW is very grateful to a very generous donor who continues to provide funding for an entire flight. We are so appreciative of his love for the HFDFW mission.
- ★ The Annual HFDFW Charity Golf Classic is HFDFW's largest fund raising event and this year the funds raised will travel 50 plus veterans to DC.
- ★ The HFDFW Charity Golf Classic was a huge hit with golfers and sponsors.

- ★ The continued success of the golf classic is the result of a team of volunteers who spend months planning and organizing the event.
- ★ Plans are underway to host the Ninth Annual Charity Golf Classic in October 2020 (TBD).
- ★ The community and businesses continue to generously donate funds to the mission. One of the most common things we hear from the veterans after their memorable patriotic trip is “I thought no one remembered”. Each donation, large or small, lets the veterans know they are remembered and appreciated... Thank you.

## **Friends of HFDFW**

- ★ The United Air Force Bands have performed for HFDFW since 2013 and continues to support the mission of HFDFW. The music brings back sweet memories, and the performance is remembered long after the trip has concluded.
- ★ Four HFDFW reunions were held at the Frontiers of Flight Museum who donate the space to HFDFW. We are grateful for the generosity of Frontiers of Flight Museum and for the efforts of volunteers who provide the hospitality for the veterans and their families.
- ★ The reunions are important component of the Honor Flight Mission (75-80% of the veterans attend the reunions) as they provide the veterans one more opportunity to reconnect with veterans they met on their trip and to celebrate their journey to D.C. with their families, guardians, and volunteers. A gift bag containing picture book and video of their trip is provided to each veteran.
- ★ Southwest Airlines provides a substantial cost savings and are very accommodating to the needs of the veterans. In 2019, HFDFW received 30 Southwest E-Pass tickets for the veterans.

- ★ The relationships we have made with Love Field (City of Dallas, TSA, Southwest, parking and the food vendors) are solid and HFDFW will continue to use SW Airlines in 2020.
- ★ The association with Gateway Crystal City Marriott remains strong, and we will continue to use them for our lodging needs in 2020.

### **Looking Forward to 2020**

- ★ Three trips are planned for 2020, one in the spring and two in the fall. The flights that are already scheduled are May 5-6 September 25-26 with their respective Pre-flight Briefing the Saturday before the flight. Tentatively the last fall trip will be October 30-31.
- ★ The HFDFW Golf Classic will be held in October (TBD).
- ★ Veterans continue to apply to travel; approximately 10-15 applications are received a month.
- ★ Over 350 veterans remain on the Waiting List. Raising funds for HFDFW will be a major focus in 2020 to ensure that the mission continues to serve veterans.

In conclusion

It has been my honor to serve alongside the HFDFW BOARD in 2019. I am very proud of the dedication that each of you brings to the mission of HFDFW. I thank you on behalf of all of the veterans' lives that you have touched with your work for HFDFW. YOU make a difference.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." ~ Maya Angelou

Respectfully,

Melaine 'Tudy' Giordano MS, RN

President Honor Flight DFW

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